LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. *(Currently amended)* A method of fermenting milk comprising adding a cultured purine or thymidine auxotrophic bacterial strain to milk and keeping the milk under conditions where the bacterial culture is able to acidify the milk**, wherein said auxotrophic bacterial strain is non-proliferating in the milk**.

Claims 2–8 *(Cancelled)*.

9. *(Previously presented)* A method according to claim 1 wherein the purine or thymidine auxotrophic bacterial strain is a strain of a species selected from the group consisting of *Lactococcus* spp., *Lactobacillus* spp., *Leuconostoc* spp., *Pediococcus* spp., *Streptococcus* spp., *Propionibacterium* spp., *Bifidobacterium* spp., *Staphylococcus* spp., *Micrococcus* spp., *Bacillus* spp., *Enterobacteriaceae* spp. *Actinomycetes* spp., *Corynebacterium* spp. and *Brevibacterium* spp.

10. *(Previously presented)* A method according to claim 9 wherein the purine or thymidine auxotrophic bacterial strain is a purine or thymidine auxotrophic strain of *Lactococcus lactis*.

11. *(Previously presented)* A method according to claim 1 wherein the cultured purine or thymidine auxotrophic bacterial strain is added to the milk at a concentration between 10^5 and 10^9 CFU/ml or g of the milk.

12. *(Currently amended)* A method according to claim 1 where the purine or thymidine auxotrophic bacterial strain comprises a genetically modified strain transformed with a plasmid including a DNA sequence **encoding an ATPase ~~selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID No. 7, SEQ ID No. 8, SEQ ID No. 9, SEQ ID No. 10, and SEQ ID No. 11~~**.

Claims 13–16 *(Cancelled)*.

17. *(Previously presented)* A method according to claim 1 wherein the purine or thymidine auxotrophic bacterial strain is a strain that increases the size of its cells without mitosis when cultured in milk.

Claims 18–23 *(Cancelled).*

24. *(Previously presented)* The method of claim 1 wherein the cultured purine or thymidine auxotrophic bacterial strain does not include any of the strains DN101, DN102, DN103, DN104 and DN105.

Claims 25–27 *(Cancelled).*

28. *(Previously presented)* A method according to claim 1 wherein the bacterial strain is *Lactococcus lactis* strain DN105 deposited under the accession number DSM 12289.

29. *(Currently amended)* A method according to claim 1 wherein the bacterial strain is *Lactococcus lactis* strain MBP71 deposited under the accession number **DSM 12891** ~~**DSN12891**~~.

30. *(Currently amended)* A method for keeping the capability of a bacterial strain to ferment milk even in the presence of a bacteriophage, the method comprising:

adding a cultured purine or thymidine auxotrophic bacterial strain to milk, and keeping the milk under conditions where the purine or thymidine auxotrophic bacterial strain is able to ferment the milk**, wherein said auxotrophic bacterial strain is non-proliferating in the milk**.

31. *(Currently amended)* A method of preparing a dairy flavouring and/or a product for cheese flavouring comprising, adding a cultured purine or thymidine auxotrophic bacterial strain to a dairy flavouring and/or a product for cheese flavouring starting material, and maintaining the thus-obtained inoculated dairy flavouring and/or product for cheese flavouring starting material under such conditions that the bacterial strain of the bacterial culture is metabolically active **and is able to acidify or ferment the dairy flavouring and/or a product for cheese flavouring starting material, wherein said auxotrophic bacterial strain is non-proliferating in the dairy flavouring and/or a product for cheese flavouring starting material**.

32. *(Previously presented)* A method according to claim 9 wherein the purine or thymidine auxotrophic bacterial strain is a strain of *E. coli*.

33. *(Previously presented)* The method of claim 1, wherein the purine or thymidine auxotrophic bacterial strain is incapable of replicating in milk.

34. *(Previously presented)* The method of claim 1, further comprising propagating the purine or thymidine auxotrophic bacterial strain in a medium in which the strain is capable of replicating prior to adding the cultured purine or thymidine auxotrophic bacterial strain to milk.

35. *(Previously presented)* The method of claim 1, wherein the milk further comprises a bacteriophage.

36. *(Previously presented)* The method of claim 1, whereby the milk is acidified to a pH less than or equal to 5.0.

37. *(Previously presented)* The method of claim 1 which produces a dairy flavour, a product for cheese flavouring, a food product, or a feed product.

38. *(Previously presented)* The method of claim 31, wherein the purine or thymidine auxotrophic bacterial strain is incapable of replicating in the dairy flavouring and/or product for cheese flavouring starting material.

39. *(Previously presented)* The method of claim 31, further comprising propagating the purine or thymidine auxotrophic bacterial strain in a medium in which the strain is capable of replicating prior to adding the cultured purine or thymidine auxotrophic bacterial strain to the dairy flavouring and/or product for cheese flavouring starting material.

40. *(Previously presented)* The method of claim 31, wherein the dairy flavouring and/or product for cheese flavouring starting material further comprises a bacteriophage.

41. *(Previously presented)* The method of claim 31, whereby the dairy flavouring and/or product for cheese flavouring starting material is acidified to a pH less than or equal to 5.0.

42. *(New)* The method of claim 31, wherein the cultured purine or thymidine auxotrophic bacterial strain is added to the dairy flavouring and/or product for cheese flavouring starting material at a concentration between 10^5 and 10^9 CFU/ml or g of the dairy flavouring and/or product for cheese flavouring starting material.

43. *(New)* The method of claim 1 which results in preparation of a product selected from the group consisting of a dairy flavour, a product for cheese flavouring, a food product, and a feed product.

44. *(New)* Use of a culture as obtained in the method of claim 1 as a starter culture in the preparation of a product selected from the group consisting of a dairy flavour, a product for cheese flavouring, a food product and a feed product.